

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BUENOS 04080 01 OF 04 270418Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 4 BUENOS AIRES 4080

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, AR
SUBJECT: DRAFT MEMCON OF NEWSOM MEETING WITH ARGENTINE HUMAN RIGHTS
GROUPS

1. DATE: MAY 25, 1978

PARTICIPANTS:

PERMANENT ASSEMBLY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS:

BISHOP CARLOS GATTINONI, CO-PRESIDENT
DR. AUGUSTO CONTE MCDONELL, VICE-PRESIDENT
DR. EMILIO MIGNONE, VICE-PRESIDENT
FATHER ENZO GIUSTOZZI, SECRETARY
RABBI ROBERTO GRAETZ, MEMBER EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS:

SR. JORGE CORREA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
DR. JORGE PASCALE, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
SR. MARIO LEONFONTE, SECRETARY

MOTHERS OF THE PLAZA DE MAYO:
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PAGE 02 BUENOS 04080 01 OF 04 270418Z

SRA. PASTOR DE BONAFINI
SRA. MELLER DE PARAGAMENT

UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM

MR. FRED RONDON, DEPUTY DIRECTOR ARA/ECA

MR. F. A. HARRIS, POLITICAL OFFICER, AMEMB.
BUENOS AIRES

PLACE: THE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS IN ARGENTINA

2. THE UNDER SECRETARY'S OPENING REMARKS -----

MR. NEWSOM STATED THAT HIS VISIT TO ARGENTINA WAS TO DEMONSTRATE THE CONTINUING UNITED STATES CONCERN REGARDING HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS HERE AND ALSO TO DEMONSTRATE THE UNITED STATES INTEREST IN IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH ARGENTINA. AS HE WISHED TO OBTAIN AN IMPRESSION OF THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES IN ARGENTINA, HE COULD NOT LEAVE ARGENTINA BEFORE MEETING WITH THOSE FIGHTING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND LEARNING OF THE PROBLEMS WHICH THEY FACE.

3. MR. NEWSOM SAID THERE ARE TWO ISSUES WHICH CONCERN THE UNITED STATES' EXECUTIVE AND CONGRESS. THE FIRST IS THE TRAGIC QUESTION OF THE DISAPPEARED. HE REQUESTED IMPRESSIONS FROM THE HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS REGARDING WHAT IS BEING DONE TO FACILITATE THE SEARCH BY FAMILIES FOR THEIR DISAPPEARED RELATIVES. THE SECOND ISSUE RELATES TO THOSE BEING HELD UNDER DETENTION. REGARDING
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BUENOS 04080 01 OF 04 270418Z

THIS ISSUE HE WAS INTERESTED TO LEARN IF PRISONERS ARE BEING RELEASED AND WHETHER THE U.S. COULD BE HELPFUL.

4. INTRODUCTORY STATEMENTS BY HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS --

MOTHERS OF THE PLAZA DE MAYO: MRS. BONATINI AND MRS. PARGAMENT SAID THAT THEY WERE TWO OF THE MOTHERS WHO MEET EVERY THURSDAY IN THE PLAZA DE MAYO TO PROTEST SILENTLY THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THEIR CHILDREN. THEY STAY IN THE PLAZA UNTIL THE POLICE FORCE THEM OUT. THEY NOTED THAT THEY ARE STILL DEMONSTRATING WEEKLY AND WILL CONTINUE TO SHOW UP IN THE PLAZA UNTIL THEY RECEIVE INFORMATION WHETHER THEIR CHILDREN ARE ALIVE OR DEAD. MRS. PARGAMENT POINTED OUT THAT THERE IS NO PLACE TO OBTAIN INFORMATION REGARDING THE DISAPPEARED. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, SHE SAID THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR ROUTINELY SAYS THAT IT HAS NO INFORMATION REGARDING THE DISAPPEARED, AS DO THE POLICE AND THE MILITARY FORCES. THERE ARE ONLY NEGATIVE REPLIES. SHE SAID THAT AT TIMES MOTHERS RECEIVE EXTRA-OFFICIAL INFORMATION THAT THEIR CHILDREN ARE BEING DETAINED IN A POLICE OR MILITARY FACILITY; BUT WHEN THEY GO TO FIND THEIR CHILDREN, THEY ARE TOLD THE

CHILDREN ARE NOT THERE.

5. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION REGARDING REAPPEARANCES, MRS. PARGAMENT SAID THAT ONLY A FEW APPEAR. MRS. BONAFINI MENTIONED THAT IN HER OWN CASE A FRIEND OF HER SON, WHO WAS CHARGED WITH STEALING, WAS RELEASED AFTER HAVING SPENT THREE MONTHS IN AN UNDERGROUND PLACE (POZO) WITH HER SON. ACCORDING TO THE REPORT SHE HAD RECEIVED, THE DETENTION FACILITY WAS UNIMAGINABLE -- THE PRISONERS HAVE ALMOST NO CLOTHES, NO BLANKETS AND ARE NOT ABLE TO BATHE. DESPITE THE FACT THAT SHE KNOWS HER SON WAS HELD BY THE GOVERNMENT, SHE ONLY RECEIVES DENIALS.

6. IN RESPONSE TO ANOTHER QUESTION, THE MOTHERS STATED THAT
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 BUENOS 04080 01 OF 04 270418Z

THEIR CHILDREN'S NAMES APPEARED ON THE RECENT LA PRENSA LIST OF 2,500 DISAPPEARED CASES. THEY ADDED THAT THEY HAVE PRESENTED TESTIMONIES TO THE MEDH AND TO THE PERMANENT ASSEMBLY. THEY HAVE FILED MANY HABEAS CORPUSES. THEY HAVE VISITED THE MONISTRY OF INTERIOR, AS WELL AS POLICE AND ARMY HEADQUARTERS, BUT NO ONE ACKNOWLEDGES THE DETENTION OF THEIR CHILDREN. THEY NOTED ALSO THAT THEIR SONS' CASES HAD BEEN INCLUDED IN THE RECENT HABEAS CORPUS PETITION TO THE SUPREME COURT. THE UNDER SECRETARY INQUIRED ABOUT THE EFFECT OF A SUPREME COURT DECISION ON HABEAS CORPUS PROCEEDINGS. THE MOTHERS REPLIED THAT THE COURT'S DECISION WOULD HAVE NO EFFECT. HOWEVER, MRS. PARGAMENT NOTED THAT SEVERAL GRANDMOTHERS, WHOSE DAUGHTERS DISAPPEARED WHILE PREGNANT, CALLED ON THE PRESIDENT OF THE SUPREME COURT LAST WEEK. THE CHIEF

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 01 BUENOS 04080 02 OF 04 270428Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 4 BUENOS AIRES 4080

NODIS

JUDGE WAS VERY MOVED BY THE VISIT AND REQUESTED THEM TO ARRANGE A MEETING WITH ALL THE 13 GRANDMOTHERS TO SEE IF JUDICIAL EFFORTS COULD BE MADE ON THEIR BEHALF. MRS. PARGAMENT CONTINUED THAT THERE IS INFORMATION THAT CHILDREN BORN TO DISAPPEARED MOTHERS HAVE BEEN GIVEN AWAY. THIS SHE DESCRIBED AS THE WORST VIOLATION COMMITTED BY THE GOVERNMENT. (NOTE: THE MOTHERS PRESENTED SECRETARY NEWSOM A LETTER AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE MEETING WHICH CONTAINED DETAILED INFORMATION REGARDING THE ABDUCTION OF THE 13 PREGNANT MOTHERS.) MR. NEWSOM INQUIRED WHETHER DISAPPEARANCES CONTINUE TO TAKE PLACE. THERE WERE A GENERAL AFFIRMATION THAT DISAPPEARANCES ARE CONTINUING.

7. PERMANENT ASSEMBLY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS:

DR. MIGNONE PRESENTED AN OVERVIEW OF THE ARGENTINE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION. HE SAID THAT BOTH THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (MEDH) AND THE PERMANENT ASSEMBLY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ARE DEDICATED TO RESOLVING THE HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS IN ARGENTINA. THE MEDH IS AN ECUMENICAL ORGANIZATION OF CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT CHURCHES AND HAS A RELIGIOUS BASE. THE PERMANENT ASSEMBLY IS ALSO MULTI-RELIGIOUS, BUT IT IS MORE OF AN INSTITUTION OF PERSONS, RATHER THAN ORGANIZATIONS. CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BUENOS 04080 02 OF 04 270428Z

AMONG ITS LEADERSHIP ARE INDIVIDUALS FROM LABOR, THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY, INTELLECTUALS, PROFESSORS, ETC. ALL THE ASSEMBLY'S MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN ITS ACTIVITIES AS PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS. BOTH THE ASSEMBLY AND THE MEDH HAVE CO-PRESIDENTS HELD UNDER EXECUTIVE DETENTION WITHOUT CHARGES. THE ASSEMBLY'S CO-PRESIDENT ALFREDO BRAVO AND THE MEDH'S CO-PRESIDENT FEREZ ESQUIVEL DO NOT KNOW THE REASON FOR THEIR DETENTION.

8. DR. MIGNONE

POINTED OUT THAT DISAPPEARANCES CONTINUE IN ARGENTINA ---- IN THIS MONTH ALONE, THE ASSEMBLY HAS RECEIVED REPORTS OF SOME 40 CASES. HE NOTED THAT A LIST OF THESE CASES WAS GIVEN TO MR. HARRIS JUST BEFORE THE MEETING. DR. MIGNONE COMMENTED THAT THE MAY DISAPPEARANCES FOLLOW THE SAME PATTERN WE HAVE SEEN IN THE LAST TWO AND ONE-HALF YEARS, SHOWING THAT ILLEGAL PROCEDURES ARE

BEING CONTINUED. DR. MIGNONE EMPHASIZED THAT THE CASES THE ASSEMBLY KNOWS ABOUT ARE ONLY A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF THE CASES THAT ACTUALLY OCCUR. ONLY THOSE WHO COME TO THE MEDH OR THE PERMANENT ASSEMBLY OFFICES HAVE THEIR CASES REPORTED. THERE IS GREAT FEAR AMONG FAMILIES IN REPORTING DISAPPEARANCE CASES. MOREOVER, THERE IS VERY LITTLE PUBLICITY GIVEN TO THE ACTIVITIES OF THE FEW HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS IN ARGENTINA. THERE IS STRONG SELF-CENSORSHIP IN THE ARGENTINE PRESS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE BUENOS AIRES HERALD. THERE IS NO DISCUSSION AT ALL OF HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS ON RADIO AND TELEVISION. PEOPLE LIVING IN THE INTERIOR, WHO HAVE HAD DISAPPEARANCES IN THEIR FAMILY, DO NOT HAVE THE MEANS OR IN MANY CASES THE RESOURCES TO CONTACT THESE ORGANIZATIONS.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 BUENOS 04080 02 OF 04 270428Z

9. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION REGARDING THE TYPES OF INDIVIDUALS DISAPPEARING, MR. MIGNONE SAID THAT THE SAME GENERAL PATTERN IS BEING FOLLOWED, ONLY PERHAPS MORE WORKERS ARE DISAPPEARING NOW THAN IN EARLIER TIMES. HE STRESSED THAT THE TOTAL NUMBER OF DISAPPEARANCES IS EXTREMELY LARGE. HE NOTED THAT THE HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS PUBLISHED A LIST IN LA PRENSA OF 2,500 REPORTED NAMES; HOWEVER, FOR EACH NAME REPORTED THERE ARE 3, 4, 5 OR, IN HIS ESTIMATE, 10 CASES WHICH ARE NOT REPORTED. HE CONCLUDED THAT AT THE VERY MINIMUM THERE ARE BETWEEN 8 AND 9,000 DISAPPEARED PERSONS, BUT SAID THAT HIS PERSONAL ESTIMATION WAS THAT THE ACTUAL NUMBER IS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF 25-30,000 PERSONS. MRS. BONAFINI INTERRUPTED TO NOTE THAT IN LA PLATA IT IS AGREED THAT AROUND 7,000 STUDENTS HAVE DISAPPEARED.

10. DR. MIGNONE CONTINUED, STATING THAT TO THE NUMBER OF DISAPPEARED MUST BE ADDED SOME 4,000 PERSONS DETAINED WITHOUT CHARGES UNDER THE PODER EJECUTIVO NACIONAL. MIGNONE COMMENTED THAT ALTHOUGH PRESIDENT VIDELA SAYS THERE ARE NO POLITICAL PRISONERS IN ARGENTINA, THOSE PERSONS HELD WITHOUT CHARGES CAN ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS POLITICAL PRISONERS. HE SAID THAT GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE CASES OF BRAVO AND PEREZ ESQUIVEL, ADMIT THAT NEITHER PERSON HAS BEEN INVOLVED WITH SUBVERSION. IN FACT, NEITHER HAS EVEN BEEN INTERROGATED WHILE IN DETENTION.

11. MIGNONE CONTINUED THAT TO THESE NUMBERS MUST ALSO BE ADDED THE 8 TO 10,000 PERSONS KILLED, WHOSE DEATHS ARE KNOWN. MIGNONE STATED THAT THERE ALSO MUST BE ADDED SOME THOUSANDS WHO HAVE BEEN TAKEN PRISONER,

INTERROGATED, IN MANY CASES TORTURED, AND THEN RELEASED.
DR. MIGNONE ESTIMATED THAT THERE HAVE BEEN IN THE
NEIGHBORHOOD OF 50,000 PERSONS AFFECTED BY THE
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 BUENOS 04080 02 OF 04 270428Z

ARGENTVNE ANTI-SUBVERSIVE EFFORT. HE NOTED THAT OF
THIS TOTAL ONLY AROUND 1,000 PERSONS HAD BEEN LEGALLY
PROCESSED, 500 PLUS IN THE CIVILIAN COURTS AND 300 PLUS
IN THE MILITARY COURTS. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, DR.
MIGNONE REPLIED THAT THE CIVIL COURTS WERE OPEN AND
DEFENSE LAWYERS WERE AVAILABLE; HOWEVER, HE NOTED THE
MILITARY COURTS WERE CLOSED AND DEFENDANTS DID NOT
HAVE THE RIGHT TO COUNSEL.

12. MR. NEWSOM INQUIRED WHETHER JUDGES WERE INTIMIDATED.
THERE WAS A CONSENSUS THAT THE JUDGES IN THE CIVILIAN
COURTS WERE NOT PRESENTLY INTIMIDATED. MR. NEWSOM

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 01 BUENOS 04080 03 OF 04 270429Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 4 BUENOS AIRES 4080

NODIS

ASKED IF THERE WERE, IN FACT, ACQUITTALS IN THE
CIVILIAN COURTS. BISHOP GATTINONI RESPONDED THAT THERE
WERE CASES OF PERSONS BEING ACQUITTED OF CHARGES IN
CIVILIAN COURTS; UNFORTUNATELY, IN SOME CASES WHERE THE
PERSONS WERE RELEASED, THEY WERE KIDNAPPED AND
DISAPPEARED. HE SAID THAT MORE FREQUENTLY PERSONS,
UPON ACQUITTAL, WOULD BE PLACED UNDER THE PODER EJECUTIVO
NACIONAL. BISHOP GATTINONI RELATED THAT SEVERAL PERSONS

THIS YEAR HAD BEEN RELEASED FROM PRISON LATE AT NIGHT AND HAD THEN DISAPPEARED.

13. DR. MIGNONE PROCEEDED AND STATED THAT THE ROOTS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM IN ARGENTINA RELATED TO THE DOCTRINE OF WAR WHICH THE MILITARY FORCES HAD ADOPTED IN 1975 TO FIGHT SUBVERSION. THIS DOCTRINE ALLOWED KIDNAPPING, TORTURE AND KILLING, WITHOUT ANY LIMITS BEING IMPOSED FROM ABOVE. FURTHERMORE, THE ARMED FORCES AS A MATTER OF POLICY DENIED SEIZURE OF ALL PERSONS. HE CONCLUDED THAT IN SUCH A SITUATION THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY OF RESPECT FOR THE LAW. THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM IS AT THE MARGIN OF ACTUAL DEVELOPMENTS IN ARGENTINA.

14. DR. MIGNONE CONTINUED THAT IT WAS RIDICULOUS TO
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BUENOS 04080 03 OF 04 270429Z

THINK THAT IN A WELL CONTROLLED DICTATORSHIP SUCH AS ARGENTINA THAT 10,000 TO 20,000 PERSONS COULD DISAPPEAR WITHOUT A TRACE. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE COURT SYSTEM WAS POWERLESS TO PLAY A ROLE IN RESOLVING THIS PROBLEM. HE REFERRED TO A SUPREME COURT OPINION LAST YEAR WHICH HELD THAT THE COURTS HAD NO MEANS TO INVESTIGATE THESE REPORTED DISAPPEARANCES AS THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH DID NOT ITSELF INVESTIGATE THEM, NOR ANSWER JUDICIAL INQUIRIES.

15. DR. MIGNONE EMPHASIZED THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE THAT A MILITARY GOVERNMENT IN POWER FOR TWO YEARS CANNOT MAINTAIN CONTROL OVER ITS OWN TROOPS. HE SAID HE THOUGHT THE MILITARY WAS IN CONTROL OF ITS FORCES AND THEREFORE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DISAPPEARANCES. HE CHARACTERIZED THE CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION AS ONE OF MILITARY FEUDALISM. DR. MIGNONE EMPHASIZED THAT THE SITUATION CONTINUES AS BEFORE; THE GOVERNMENT HAS ADOPTED NO MEASURES TO MODIFY THE SITUATION. BISHOP GATTINONI ADDED THAT THE HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS DO NOT WANT PROMISES SUCH AS THEY WERE GIVEN LAST YEAR. (NOTE: PROBABLE REFERENCE TO PRESIDENT VIDELA'S PEACE BY CHRISTMAS STATEMENTS MADE IN THE UNITED STATES.)

16. MEDH: MR. PASCALE EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION TO THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR COMING TO ARGENTINA. HE SAID THE MEDH, WHICH IS MADE UP OF PERSONS AND GROUPS EXPRESSING RELIGIOUS CONCERNS OVER THE HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS HERE, GREATLY APPRECIATE THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THE COMPLICATED PROBLEM THAT DR. MIGNONE SO WELL EXPLAINED. HE ADDED THAT THE PROBLEM HERE IS VERY COMPLICATED AND PREDATES THIS

GOVERNMENT. FURTHERMORE, HE NOTED THAT THE SCALE OF
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PAGE 03 BUENOS 04080 03 OF 04 270429Z

VIOLENCE HERE IS NON-LINEAR; IT IS A TWISTING SITUATION.
HE SAID THAT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS WELL INFORMED
REGARDING HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS -- THE CHURCH ITSELF
HAS HAD 17 PRIESTS AFFECTED PLUS KIDNAPPING OF THE
FRENCH NUNS AND OTHER LAY CHURCH LEADERS KIDNAPPED.
MANY FAMILIES CAUGHT UP IN THESE EVENTS PREFER TO EXPRESS
THEIR PROBLEMS TO THE CHURCH.

MR. PASCALE SAID THAT EACH DAY FROM ALL SECTORS
OF ARGENTINE SOCIETY, PEOPLE CONTINUE TO COME TO THE
MEDH OFFICES TO REPORT DISAPPEARANCES. SINCE THE LA
PRENSA 2500 LIST WAS PUBLISHED THE NUMBER OF PERSONS
COMING EACH DAY HAS DOUBLED. HE SAID THE MEDH WISHES
TO BE VERY STRICT IN ITS STATEMENTS REGARDING THE NUMBER
OF DISAPPEARANCES, BUT IT CAN SAY DEFINITELY THAT MANY
NEW CASES ARE ARRIVING DAILY. MR. PASCALE NOTED THAT
THERE ARE QUALITATIVE DIFFERENCES AS WELL WHICH ARE SHOW-
ING UP. FOR EXAMPLE, SOME WIVES OF SENIOR MILITARY AND
POLICE OFFICERS HAVE COME RECENTLY TO REPORT THE DIS-
APPEARANCES OF THEIR SONS. THIS SHOWS HOW COMPLICATED THE
SITUATION IS IN ARGENTINA. THE POWER DOES NOT BELONG TO
ONLY ONE GROUP.

17. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS -----

MR. NEWSOM INQUIRED WHAT CHANGES THE GROUPS
FORESAW AFTER THE AUGUST 1 POLITICAL ADJUSTMENTS.
BISHOP GATTINONI RESPONDED THAT THE REAL POWERS
OF THE PRESIDENT HAVE STILL NOT BEEN DECIDED.
WE HOPE, HE SAID THAT THINGS WILL IMPROVE, BUT
UNFORTUNATELY IN THE PAST THE PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN
DEALT WITH BY PROMISES WHICH WERE NOT FULFILLED.

18. THE UNDER SECRETARY COMMENTED THAT BECAUSE
OF PRESENT ARGENTINE CONDITIONS, THE UNITED
STATES GOVERNMENT HAS SUSPENDED OFFICIAL TRANS-
ACTIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF ARGENTINA. HE
WONDERED WHETHER, IN THE VIEW OF THE GROUP,
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 BUENOS 04080 03 OF 04 270429Z

THESE HAD BEEN EFFECTIVE. DR. MIGNONE REPLIED
THAT THE HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS FIRMLY
SUPPORTED THE U.S. POLICY. HE ADDED THAT AID
TO "SUCH AN INHUMAN GOVERNMENT" SHOULD BE DENIED
ALL TOGETHER. FATHER GIUSTOZZI COMMENTED THAT

THE SOLUTIONS TO THE HQMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS HERE
MUST COME INTERNALLY, BUT THAT OUTSIDE HELP WAS
ALSO NEEDED. HE SAID THAT HE HOPES THAT THE
UNITES STATES' HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY WORKS BETTER
THAN THE PREVIOUS POLICY OF "REAL POLITIQUE".
RABBI GRAETZ INTERJECTED THAT OUTSIDE POLITICAL
PRESSURE WAS HELPFUL AND WILL BE OF GREATER

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PAGE 01 BUENOS 04080 04 OF 04 270431Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 4 OF 4 BUENOS AIRES 4080

NODIS

HELP AS THE ARGENTINE HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS
MOBILIZE MORE.

19. MR. NEWSOM POSED THE PROBLEM THAT AS MOVES
WERE MADE TO ISOLATE ARGENTINA THERE WAS A
TENDENCY FOR SOME SECTORS TO MOVE TOWARDS
GREATER NATIONALISM. THIS ILLUSTRATES THE
DILEMMA IN TRYING TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES IN OTHER
SOCIETIES. THE UNITED STATES CAN ISOLATE
ARGENTINA OR CAN SEEK TO DETERMINE AREAS OF
PROGRESS, OR DECLARED PROGRESS, AND BY SOME
RELAXATION OF ISOLATION ENCOURAGE THOSE WHO
ARE MOVING IN A CORRECT DIRECTION. HE SAID
THAT HE WOULD LEAVE ARGENTINA WITH AN APPRECI-
ATION OF THE TRAGEDY WHICH EXISTS HERE, BUT HE
NOTED THAT IF THERE ARE DEMONSTRATED AREAS OF
PROGRESS THESE SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED, BUT ADDED
THAT HE HAS NOT AS YET IDENTIFIED SUCH AREAS.
FATHER GIUSTOZZI REPLIED THAT THE PRINCIPLES
THAT THE UNDERSECRETARY HAD STATED WERE CLEAR.
HOWEVER, HE WAS CONCERNED BY REPORTS FROM
THE UNITED STATES THAT ADMIRAL MASSERA WAS

THOUGHT TO BE MORE DEMOCRATIC THAN THE OTHER
MEMBERS OF THE JUNTA. MR. NEWSOM REPLIED THAT
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BUENOS 04080 04 OF 04 270431Z

HE WAS NOT MAKING ANY POLITICAL DETERMINATIONS
IN HIS STATEMENT.

20. MR. NEWSOM SAID THAT HE WANTED TO MAKE IT
PLAIN THAT NO U.S. OFFICIAL CAN COME TO A
COUNTRY SUCH AS ARGENTINA WITHOUT MEETING WITH
PERSONS WHO REPRESENT THE OPINIONS THESE GROUPS
REPRESENT. HE WONDERED IF THE EMBASSY IN ITS
CONVERSATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT REFLECTED
THE IDEAS WHICH HAD BEEN PUT FORTH HERE,
WOULD ANY OF THOSE IN ATTENDANCE BE IN TROUBLE?
THERE WAS A CONSENSUS THAT THERE WAS NO
PROBLEM. DR. MIGNONE COMMENTED THAT THE
ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED HERE ARE OPEN AND THEIR
ACTIVITIES PUBLIC. MRS. PARGAMENT ADDED THAT
WHEN THE MOTHERS MEET WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS
THEY SAY MANY HARDED THINGS THAN HAVE BEEN SAID
THIS AFTERNOON.

21. MR. NEWSOM SAID THAT AS AN INDIVIDUAL GOVERN-
MENT, THE UNITED STATES CANNOT INQUIRE FULLY INTO
THE SITUATION IN OTHER COUNTRIES. OFTEN, HE
NOTED, WE SEEK TO ENCOURAGE GOVERNMENTS TO INVITE
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE INTER-
NATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS OR THE INTER-
AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION TO VISIT
COUNTRIES. HE QUERIED WHETHER THE GROUP CONSIDERS
THAT SUCH VISITS ARE HELPFUL. RABBI GRAETZ
RESPONDED THAT SUCH VISITS WOULD CERTAINLY BE
HELPFUL AND ENCOURAGING; BUT IN TERMS OF CON-
CRETE RESULTS, HE OPINED THAT THEY WERE OF
LITTLE HELP. MR. PASCALE POINTED OUT SOME
PROBLEMS WITH INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BUENOS 04080 04 OF 04 270431Z

HE NOTED THAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF
JURISTS AND THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, AND
ESPECIALLY THE LATTER'S PRESIDENT, CHRIS HARPER,
HAD RECENTLY BEEN ATTACKED IN THE ARGENTINE
PRESS AS BEING ANTI-ARGENTINE. RECENTLY, THE
THREE ORGANIZATIONS WHICH PUT TOGETHER THE
LA PRENSA ADVERTISEMENT WERE BITTERLY ATTACKED.

HE NOTED THAT HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS MUST BE VERY CAREFUL WITH RESPECT TO THEIR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AS THEY DO NOT WISH TO FALL INTO A TRAP. FATHER GIUSTOZZI ADDED THAT AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, WHICH VISITED ARGENTINA IN 1977 HAD ALSO BEEN SEVERELY ATTACKED BY THE ARGENTINE PRESS. DR. MIGNONE SUGGESTED THAT THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION VISIT WAS VERY IMPORTANT. HOWEVER, HE NOTED, THAT DESPITE THE PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION WISHED TO VISIT ARGENTINA, THE GOVERNMENT HAD NOT INVITED THEM.

22. BISHOP GATTINONI AFFIRMED THAT UNITED STATES HELP WAS NEEDED IN THE RIGHT OF OPTION PROGRAM. HE SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN GREAT DIFFICULTY IN RECEIVING RIGHT OF OPTION CERTIFICATES FROM THE OTHER EMBASSIES AND THAT A UNITED STATES RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM WOULD MAKE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO RESOLVING THE DETAINEES PROBLEM. MR. NEWSOM RESPONDED THAT THE RIGHT OF OPTION DETAINEE PROGRAM WAS UNDER CONSIDERATION IN THE UNITED STATES. HE NOTED THAT IF THE PROGRAM DOES NOT GO THROUGH RIGHT AWAY IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE ISSUES IN ARGENTINA, BUT HAS RATHER TO DO WITH THE PROBLEMS OF AUTHORITY BETWEEN THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND CONGRESS.

23. THE UNDER SECRETARY CONCLUDED BY STATING
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BUENOS 04080 04 OF 04 270431Z

THAT WHILE IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE WHAT THE UNITED STATES CAN DO IN A COMPLICATED SITUATION LIKE THIS, HE WANTED EACH OF THE INDIVIDUALS ATTENDING TO KNOW THAT PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES ARE AWARE OF THE PROBLEMS HERE AND FEEL DEEPLY ABOUT THEM. HE ASKED THE GROUPS TO PLEASE MAINTAIN THEIR CLOSE CONTACTS WITH MR. HARRIS IN THE EMBASSY, AS MR. HARRIS WOULD CONTINUE TO PROVIDE THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE WITH INFORMATION ON THEIR PERSPECTIVES.
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Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2556415
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DRAFT MEMCON OF NEWSOM MEETING WITH ARGENTINE HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS
TAGS: SHUM, PHUM, AR, US, (NEWSOM, DAVID D), (GATTINONI, CARLOS), (MCDONELL, AUGUSTO CONTE), (MIGNONE, EMILIO), (GIUSTOZZI, ENZO), (GRAETZ, ROBERTO)
To: STATE LA PAZ
Type: TE
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Review Markings:
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